UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.96/846/Part V/3
2 August 1995

Original: English

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Forty-sixth session

UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1994-1995 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1996

PART V. SOUTH WEST ASIA, NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Section 3 - Central Asian Republics

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.95-02454

V.3 CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

1. This section covers UNHCR activities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

1. Beneficiary population

2. By the end of 1994, 90 per cent of the 520,000 internally displaced persons in Tajikistan had returned to their places of origin. Of the 16,000 internally displaced who remained in Gorno-Badakhshan at the end of 1994, some 10,000 are expected to have returned by September of 1995, while local integration is planned for the remainder. An additional 4,600 Tajik refugees in Kyrgyzstan and 600 Afghan refugees in Tajikistan were receiving assistance. UNHCR supported the voluntary repatriation and subsequent reintegration of some 11,000 Tajik refugees who repatriated voluntarily from Afghanistan in 1994. Approximately 8,000 more refugees who returned spontaneously to Tajikistan during 1994 were also eligible for assistance. Protection and assistance was provided by UNHCR, on a case-by-case basis, to refugees from non-Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries who had sought asylum in Central Asia.

2. Developments in 1994 and 1995

3. Funding for UNHCR activities in Central Asia in 1994 and 1995 was sourced from United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals for Tajikistan. The 1994 appeal requested $ 14,900,000 for UNHCR's activities in Central Asia, towards which $ 9,991,738 were contributed. The 1995 United Nations appeal requested $ 12,194,000, of which $ 5,030,126 had been received as of 1 June 1995.

4. By the end of 1994 an estimated 90 per cent of those persons internally displaced from the south of Tajikistan had returned to their place of habitual residence. A major component of UNHCR's activities in Tajikistan in 1994 and the first half of 1995 involved monitoring the observance of the legal rights of former refugees and internally displaced, and intervention to ensure that reported crimes were properly investigated by the authorities. A UNHCR staff presence, particularly in the volatile south of Tajikistan, has been regarded by many international agencies as an important element in promoting stability in the areas of return.

5. The initial objective of completing the reconstruction of 17,000 houses in Tajikistan by the end of 1994 had to be delayed because contributions to the Special Programme were late in arriving. Additional delays were caused by logistical problems in the procurement and distribution of materials and by new tariff regulations that were introduced in the region. Following the procurement of required materials in the first half of 1995, the shelter project is expected to be finished this year.

6. In addition to the shelter project, UNHCR also initiated in 1994 over 20 quick impact projects (QIPs) in the primary areas of return. The QIPs were designed to ensure the maximum participation of and economic benefit to the large number of widows and other vulnerable groups located in the south of Tajikistan. The projects

also assisted the communities in general to meet their basic needs. The types of projects supported which have been developed to be sustainable and economically viable include poultry raising, soap production, cotton seed oil processing, shoe-making and clothes manufacturing. It is anticipated that UNDP will take over responsibility for the implementation of these projects during the second half of 1995, prior to their hand-over to the private sector.

7. During 1994 UNHCR assisted in the repatriation of 10,938 Tajiks from northern Afghanistan. The lower than expected level of Tajik repatriation from Afghanistan during 1994 can be attributed to the lack of access by UNHCR to the majority of the refugee population, and the presence amongst the refugees of special interest groups who advised against, and in some instances prevented, repatriation. The continuing insecurity and economic hardship experienced in Afghanistan and Tajikistan will play a large part in determining the size and time frame for any future repatriation. It is estimated that some 18,000 Tajik refugees remain in northern Afghanistan.

8. Since the end of 1994 UNHCR has been negotiating with UNDP, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other humanitarian agencies on the hand-over of certain UNHCR responsibilities, which are to be transferred as a consequence of UNHCR's phase-down from Tajikistan. It is anticipated that agreements will be made during the second half of 1995 to ensure a smooth transition of the material assistance and social reintegration functions currently undertaken by UNHCR.

9. UNHCR's office in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, coordinated assistance programmes to Tajik and Afghan refugees in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. With the exception of Tajikistan, no Central Asian Republic is a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol. In Tajikistan, UNHCR is working with national authorities to facilitate full implementation of the new national refugee law. In the absence of any international or regional legal instruments dealing with refugees in the other Central Asian States, UNHCR has been granting mandate refugee status and promoting the granting of temporary asylum to non-CIS asylum-seekers, pending the identification of a durable solution. In the absence of voluntary repatriation, UNHCR supports local integration as the most desirable durable solution, particularly for persons from the CIS.

3. 1996 country programmes

(a) Objectives

10. The primary objectives of UNHCR in Central Asia in 1996 are:

(a) to facilitate the return and reintegration of Tajik refugees and internally displaced persons;

(b) to support local integration programmes in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan;

(c) to continue to support the needs of women and other vulnerable groups within the refugee community in Central Asia;

(d) to increase the institutional and operational capacity of the Governments of the region so that they will be in a position to effectively respond to the needs of refugees and the internally displaced;

(e) to ensure the adequate protection of refugees who are not in a position to integrate into their country of asylum;

(f) to advance accession to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol; and

(g) to act as a catalyst for regional cooperation on refugee and related issues.

(b) Proposed budgets for 1996

(i) Care and maintenance

'11. UNHCR activities in Central Asia in 1996 will be placed for the first time under General Programmes. The 1996 estimates for the Uzbekistan Programme include requirements in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. The bulk of expenditure will assist in local integration, for example through income-generation projects, and the provision of technical assistance to support institution- and capacity-building.

12. Following the phase-down in **Tajikistan** UNHCR intends to continue to facilitate the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of the remaining Tajik refugees and internally displaced persons. Local settlement support will be considered for those Tajik refugees who choose to remain in Afghanistan, to assist in their integration. This assistance will be provided under the Afghan Programme.

13. UNHCR will continue to ensure the adequate protection of refugees who are not in a position to integrate into their country of asylum. Protection of non-CIS asylum-seekers, where they have been unable to benefit from the legal protection of the State in the absence of a refugee law, remains a continuing problem throughout most of Central Asia. In **Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan**, a growing number of Afghans of concern to UNHCR are unable to return to Afghanistan under the present circumstances due to instability or as a consequence of past affiliations. Several thousand Afghans may therefore need UNHCR's protection and assistance in 1996. These refugees will need to be assisted on an individual basis, until such time as a durable solution is found.

14. In **Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan**, Tajik refugees have already started to integrate into their countries of asylum. To support the process of local integration, UNHCR plans to provide shelter materials, assist in the construction of basic infrastructure and initiate income-generation activities in the areas of refugee, returnee or resettlement concentrations. Projects designed to assist vulnerable groups, such as women and children, will continue to be emphasized.

15. UNHCR will develop further its preventive strategy in Central Asia. This strategy will aim to assist in institution- and capacity-building in the region by increasing the number of workshops, seminars and training provided to Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These activities are designed to introduce regional Governments, especially those agencies dealing with migratory movements and asylum in the region, to refugee law and related migratory issues. Technical assistance and training will be supported by the provision of capacity-building equipment (e.g. computers/software, photocopiers) to the relevant authorities.

16. The development of an integrated strategy in conjunction with the CIS Conference process will also act as a catalyst to promote regional cooperation in dealing with refugee issues. It is hoped that other Central Asian Republics will join Tajikistan in acceding to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol.

17. Recent hostilities in Afghanistan and the Transcaucasus have resulted in a substantial increase in population movements to the Central Asian Republics. Planned assessment missions by UNHCR and further consultations with regional Governments on this growing problem may necessitate a review of the appropriation for this programme in 1996.

18. The anticipated completion of voluntary repatriation and reintegration into local communities will lead to the closure of some Field Offices in Tajikistan and staff reduction by September 1995. The remaining Field Offices will be closed and field staff withdrawn by the end of 1995. Due to delays experienced in the hand-over of legal assistance activities to the OSCE, and in the hand-over of material assistance to UNDP and other developmental agencies, it has been necessary to extend field staff in Tajikistan longer than initially planned. Following the phase-down UNHCR will maintain a presence in Dushanbe to assist the local and central authorities in ensuring the security and protection of Afghan refugees and other asylum-seekers.

(c) Implementing partners

19. With the finalization of UNHCR's shelter programme and the anticipated hand-over of income-generation project responsibilities to UNDP and other development agencies in 1995, the level of activity involving implementing partners in Tajikistan is likely to decline. During 1995 UNHCR developed agreements in Tajikistan with the Aga Khan Foundation, Relief International, the International Rescue Committee, Médecins sans Frontières-Belgium, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Save the Children Fund (SCF)-UK, SCF-USA and the Tajik Government.

20. In the other Central Asian States UNHCR has already made agreements with the Kazakh and Kyrgyz Red Crescent Societies for the provision of assistance to Afghan refugees. With an increase in the level of operational activity in these States, UNHCR aims to boost further the involvement of national and international agencies as implementing partners.

(d) Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

21. Variations due to changes in budget parameters are not discussed in the subsequent analysis (Overview of UNHCR Activities, Part I (A/AC.96/845) refers).

(i) 1994 expenditure (all sources of funds)

22. In **Tajikistan**, 1994 expenditure was lower than the revised estimates due to savings under staff costs. The unstable security situation in Tajikistan also necessitated the procurement of additional staff safety and security equipment.

23. In **Uzbekistan**, expenditure in 1994 was lower than revised estimates, mainly because of savings under staff costs. Expenditure under joint United Nations Activities was also lower because the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA) agreed to reducing UNHCR's contribution towards premises as well as logistical and administrative support provided in Termez.

24. In **Kyrgyzstan**, limited expenditure was incurred as the three approved posts remained vacant. Operational activities were undertaken by UNHCR staff based in Uzbekistan on mission to Kyrgyzstan.

(ii) Revised 1995 requirements (all sources of funds)

25. In **Tajikistan**, the revised 1995 requirements are slightly lower than initial estimates, mainly because of decreases in common staff costs. However, most other costs have increased due to the delayed phase-down of UNHCR activities in the country. Indeed, two international posts and five local posts were extended until mid-1995. Cost for travel, supplies and materials have increased accordingly. The 1995 Consolidated Appeal anticipated a phase-down of UNHCR's field operations in Tajikistan by mid-1995 thereby reducing the administrative costs of the programme for the second half of the year. Due to the need to ensure a successful hand-over to other international agencies, the number of international and local field staff in the primary areas of return has had to be extended into the second half of 1995. At the end of 1995, all Field Offices in Tajikistan will be closed, with a core team remaining in Dushanbe. In order to facilitate the hand-over it is anticipated that some vehicles and communications and office equipment will be provided to other agencies taking over from UNHCR. Other surplus equipment will be redeployed to other UNHCR offices in Central Asia.

26. In **Uzbekistan**, the revised 1995 requirements are higher than initial estimates. Decreases in common staff costs were offset by an increase in salaries, with the creation of one Regional Legal Officer, one Regional Programme Officer and four local posts as of 1 January 1995. Budgetary provisions for travel and acquisition of furniture and equipment were increased accordingly, the latter to procure the required additional vehicles and to upgrade the computer system.

27. To support UNHCR's presence in the Central Asian Republics and to assist the respective Governments with legal reform and institution-building, Liaison Offices were created in **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan**. The Kazakhstan and

Kyrgyzstan Liaison Offices are both staffed by one Senior Liaison Officer and three local staff. The Liaison Office in Bishkek is supported by a Field Office in Osh, Kyrgyzstan. As the Liaison Office in Turkmenistan will also assist in the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees from the Islamic Republic of Iran through Turkmenistan, one Senior Liaison Officer, one Field Officer and six local staff will be recruited during the second half of 1995. The repatriation operation through Turkmenistan has necessitated the establishment of a Field Office in Kushka. The revised budgets provide each location with establishment and running costs of a new office and the procurement of vehicles, furniture, computers, photocopiers and telecommunication equipment.

(iii) Initial 1996 requirements (all sources of funds)

28. In **Tajikistan**, following the phase-down and the closure of Field Offices, UNHCR will maintain a minimum presence to assist authorities in dealing with protection issues. The initial 1996 requirements are therefore lower than the revised 1995 requirements as only the Chief of Mission, the Protection Officer, the Field Staff Safety Officer and six local staff posts have been extended until the end of 1996. All the other budget chapters have been reduced accordingly. Due to the higher than expected remaining Tajik caseload in northern Afghanistan, it is expected that the posts of two roving Field Officers, based in Dushanbe, will need to be reviewed. These officers would have responsibility for the coordination of the repatriation and social reintegration of returnees throughout Central Asia and northern Afghanistan.

29. In **Uzbekistan**, the initial 1996 requirements for staffing are the same as the revised 1995 requirements, although decreases will be achieved in the acquisition of furniture and equipment which will be completed during 1995.

30. In **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan**, the initial 1996 requirements for staffing are the same as the 1995 requirements with an expected decrease on acquisition of furniture and equipment.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1994	1995		1996	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1994 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
–	–	–	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	1,104.0
1,500.0 a/	–	–	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	–
8.6 b/	–	–	LOCAL SETTLEMENT	–
–	–	–	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Overview Tables (Part II)	1,850.9
1,508.6	0.0	0.0	SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS	2,954.9
–	–	–	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Overview Tables (Part II)	170.0
1,508.6	0.0	0.0	TOTAL (1)	3,124.9
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
4,872.2	3,900.0	7,130.0	OTHER TRUST FUNDS Assistance to returnees and displaced persons	–
2,707.0	2,155.5	2,774.1	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Overview Tables (Part II)	–
336.8	421.0	317.5	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Overview Tables (Part II)	–
7,916.0	6,476.5	10,221.6	TOTAL (2)	0.0
9,424.6	6,476.5	10,221.6	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)	3,124.9

a/ obligation incurred under the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation
b/ obligation incurred against Other Programmes